

REPORT CLASS

COUNTRY: SOUTH VIETNAM

SUBJECT: THIS IS A SITUATION REPORT IN QUANG TRI PROVINCE AS OF
0400 HOURS ON 3 FEBRUARY

ACQUIRED: VIETNAM, DANANG (3 FEBRUARY 1968)

SOURCE : THIS IS A SITUATION REPORT ON 3 FEBRUARY PREPARED BY
CAS,

MILITARY

1. ON 3 FEBRUARY QUANG TRI PROVINCE WAS MOVING INTO THE FOURTH DAY OF THE BATTLE FOR THE QUANG TRI LOWLANDS. THE ENEMY, IT APPEARED, EMPLOYED 12 BATTALIONS IN HIS DRIVE TO TAKE OVER TRIEU PHONG, MAI LINH, AND HAI LANG DISTRICTS AND QUANG TRI CITY. OVERT MILITARY OPERATIONS BEGAN IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF 31 JANUARY. HE LOST HIS INITIATIVE AFTER 24 HOURS AND WHETHER HE KNOWS IT OR NOT HE IS NOW ON THE DEFENSIVE.

2. THE ENEMY PROBABLY LOST APPROXIMATELY 1,500 KILLED IN ACTION (KIA) AND 1,000 WIA, OR ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF HIS FORCE. (MOSTLY NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY (NVA) AND SOME VIET CONG (VC).) ALLIES HAVE TAKEN ABOUT 63 PRISONERS. IN A THREE-BATTALION ATTACK ON CAM LO DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS ON 1-2 FEBRUARY THE ENEMY LOST ANOTHER 150 KIA AND 23 PRISONERS OF WAR (POW), AND THESE FIGURES ARE NOT COMPLETE. THE ENEMY STILL HAS THE CAPABILITY TO REINFORCE AND HE STILL CAN NEUTRALIZE SOME ALLIED COMBAT BASES BY

ROCKET AND ~~SNEAK~~ AIR ATTACKS (NOT YET EMPLOYED).

3. IF HE EXPECTS TO WIN THE BATTLE FOR QUANG TRI, HE MUST COMMIT THESE FORCES AND HE MUST ACHIEVE BETTER COORDINATION THAN HE HAS DEMONSTRATED SO FAR. PART OF HIS PROBLEM HAS BEEN ALLIED MASTERY OF THE SKIES DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS. THE ENEMY, AFTER SECURING TOEHOLDS ON THE NORTH AND SOUTH EDGES OF THE CITY OF QUANG TRI IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF 31 JANUARY, WAS UNABLE TO REINFORCE THESE UNITS WITH HIS^H RESERVES UNTIL THE NEXT NIGHT. THIS MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR THE ALLIES TO BLOCK THE TWO ROUTES THE NVA/VC PLANNED TO USE. FORTUNATELY ^{THE} WEATHER WAS FAIR. IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A DIFFERENT STORY HAD PILOTS BEEN GROUNDED.

4. ANOTHER FACTOR WHICH MAY HAVE INFLUENCED THE OUTCOME OF THIS BATTLE WAS THE ENEMY'S FOOLISHNESS IN SETTING UP HIS COMMAND POST SO CLOSE TO QUANG TRI CITY (VICINITY OF YD[#]343515) AND ALLIED LUCK IN^H WIPING OUT THIS COMMAND POST. ENEMY KIA INCLUDED A COLONEL AND THREE JUNIOR OFFICERS AND PROBABLY GENERAL NAM LONG AND HIS CHIEF OF STAFF. CREDIT FOR THIS COUP BELONGS TO THE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM (ARVN) NINTH AIRBORNE BATTALION[#] AND ELEMENTS OF THE ARVN SEVENTH CAVALRY (APC'S). THEY CAPTURED THE ENEMY'S COMMUNICATION FACILITY INTACT (RADIO DESTROYED). ONE OF THE LAST MESSAGES IN THE RADIO MESSAGE FILE WAS A REPORT TO HIGHER HEADQUARTERS ANNOUNCING THE DEATH OF GENERAL NAM LONG ALONG WITH HIS CHIEF OF STAFF. USING THE ENEMY'S SIGNAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS, THE AIRBORNE BATTALION COMMANDER, A NORTH VIETNAMESE HIMSELF, PERSONALLY CALLED THE ENEMY HIGHER HEAD-

QUARTERS AND ASKED IF IT WERE TRUE THAT THE GENERAL WAS DEAD. THE HIGHER HEADQUARTERS CAME RIGHT BACK WITH A CONFIRMATION. THIS STORY SOUNDS FARFETCHED AND THERE ARE STILL MANY DETAILS MISSING. MAJOR NHAN, THE SECTOR COMMANDER, EXPLAINED MOST OF THESE DETAILS. A U.S. ARMY AIRBORNE ADVISOR WITH THE NINTH AIRBORNE BATTALION LATER TOLD AN ALMOST IDENTICAL STORY. THE BODIES OF THE TWO OFFICERS HAD NOT YET BEEN FOUND, BUT THERE ARE REPORTS FROM THE VILLAGERS THAT THEY WERE DRAGGED ^AAWAY TOWARD THACH HAU HAMLET ON THE NIGHT OF 31 JANUARY. POLICE ARE HOT ON THE TRAIL OF THESE BODIES AND THE VILLAGERS ALL SEEM TO BE POSITIVE THAT THEY SAW THIS HAPPEN.

POLITICAL

5. THERE IS MUCH SENTIMENT AMONG THE PEOPLE OF QUANG TRI CITY AGAINST THE NVA AND AGAINST ANY FORM OF COALITION WITH THE COMMUNISTS. ONE GROUP, MOSTLY CATHOLICS AND MEMBERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIET PARTY (RDVP), APPARENTLY WOULD PREFER AN INDEPENDENT ANTI-COMMUNIST CENTRAL VIETNAM REPUBLIC COMPOSED OF QUANG TRI, THUA THIEN AND QUANG NAM PROVINCES IF SAIGON OPTS FOR THE COALITION COURSE OF ACTION. OBVIOUSLY THESE PEOPLE ARE NOT REALISTS BUT THE SENTIMENT IS SIGNIFICANT. ON THE AFTERNOON OF 1 FEBRUARY THE PROVINCE CHIEF HELD A VICTORY PARADE IN TOWN AND THE RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE WAS ELEFTIC. ^R THEY THREW FLOWERS, FOOD AND CIGARETTES TO THE PASSING SOLDIERS AND THERE WERE SPONTANEOUS ^A SMILES, TEARS AND CHEERING, WHICH IS SURPRISING FROM A PEOPLE

INURED TO WAR.

6. SENATOR HOANG XUAN TUU, RDVP MEMBER, HAS BEEN IN TOWN THROUGH ALL OF THIS AND HAS BEEN CHEERFUL AND OPTIMISTIC, AT LEAST OUTWARDLY. HE HAS BEEN VERY MUCH IN EVIDENCE DURING THE DAYLIGHT HOURS, VISITING THE MINED HAMLET OF TRI BUU AND THE HTHOUSANDS OF DISPLACED PERSONS CAMPING IN THE SCHOOLS AROUND TOWN. HE HAS NOT BEEN ESCORTED WITH AN OBVIOUS BODYGUARD.

7. SO FAR THE BUDDHISTS HAVE NOT RESPONDED TO THE STORY WHICH IS CIRCULATING IN QUANG TRI THAT THE MILITANT AN QUANG BUDDHISTS IN SAIGON HAVE DEFECTED TO THE NATIONAL FRONT FOR THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM (NFLSV). THERE WAS ~~ARRUMOR~~ RUMOR THAT SOME RALLYING WAS IN PROGRESS AT THE BUDDHIST HIGH SCHOOL BUT A CHECK REVEALED NO EVIDENCE OF THIS.

8. DURING THE LATE AFTERNOON OF 1 FEBRUARY THE COMBINED ACTION PLATOON (CAP) AND PROVINCIAL RECONNAISSANCE UNIT (PRU) REPORTED THAT THE ENEMY WAS HOLDING A VICTORY CELEBRATION IN THE EASTERN EDGE OF THUONG XA HAMLET (YD375497), MAI LINE DISTRICT, WHICH HAS BEEN UNDER CONTEST BY THE VC AND THE ALLIES FOR SOME WEEKS. ALLIED ARTILLERY PROMPTLY PLACED A 24" GUN TIME ON TARGET BARRAGE ON TOP OF THE CELEBRATION WITH UNKNOWN RESULTS.

9. THE PROVINCE CHIEF, LIEUTENANT COLONEL NGUYEN AM, WAS QUITE ASSERTIVE BY LATE AFTERNOON, 2 FEBRUARY. HE TOOK CHARGE OF THE DEFENSIVE ARRANGEMENTS AROUND THE TOWN AND "BOLDLY" GAVE UP THE POLICE FIELD FORCE PLATOON GUARDING HIS UNOCCUPIED RESIDENCE. THE PLATOON WAS NEEDED TO BOLSTER ONE COMPANY OF THE U.S. FIRST AIR CAVALRY WHICH WAS OBTAINED TO FILL THE GAP LEFT WHEN THE

ARVN AIRBORNE BATTALION MOVED TO HUE. DURING THE FIRST TWO DAYS OF THE FIGHTING HOWEVER, CHIEF AM WAS A VEGETABLE. THE VIETNAMESE SECTOR STAFF IS A FAIRLY GOOD ONE, BUT IT TENDS TO FALL APART WHEN OPERATIONS DO NOT CONFORM TO CLASSIC PATTERNS. WITH THE FIVE, AND NOW SIX, AIR CAVALRY COMPANIES TO WORK WITH, CONVENTIONAL TACTICS HAVE TO BE SET ASIDE.

REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT AND REFUGEES

10. THE ENEMY NOW HOLDS ^{ABOUT} ~~ABOUT~~ TWO-THIRDS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT (RD) AREA MOSTLY INTRIEU PHONG DISTRICT. THE ALLIES ARE GOING TO BE FORCED TO GO IN AND ROOT OUT THESE FORCES, WHICH MAY WRECK HAVOC ON THE HAMLETS IN THE PROCESS. IN ADDITION, THE ALLIES DO NOT HAVE THE TROOPS TO MAKE A THOROUGH CORDON AROUND THE AREA. A PSYOPS CAMPAIGN WILL BE TRIED LATER TODAY, BUT THIS IS AIMED MOSTLY AT CALMING THE NERVES OF THE PEOPLE. THEY SEEM TO BE CONFUSED BY ALL THAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST 72 HOURS AND THE ENEMY ~~IS~~ IS PROPAGANDIZING TO WIN THEM.

11. WHEN THE ENEMY FINALLY CUTS OUT, IT IS HOPED HE DOES NOT TRY TO TAKE HOSTAGES WITH HIM. HE MAY KILL HAMLET AND VILLAGE CHIEFS WHOLESALE AND HE MAY EVACUATE EVERY YOUTH IN SIGHT. ANY OR ALL OF THESE COURSES OF ACTION WOULD HURT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE CAUSE FOR A LONG TIME TO COME.

12. ALTHOUGH QUANG TRI CITY IS FULL OF REFUGEES, THERE WILL NO DOUBT BE MORE IF THE ALLIES HAVE TO FIGHT THEIR WAY THROUGH THE RD AREA. ALREADY THERE ARE ~~ABOUT~~ ABOUT 300 CIVILIAN CASUALTIES IN THE HOSPITAL FROM THE FIGHTING AROUND TOWN. MANY MORE CAN BE EXPECTED AS THE ALLIES PUSH THEIR WAY OUTWARD.

OUTLOOK

13. ALL IN ALL AMERICANS IN QUANG TRI CAME THROUGH BETTER THAN COULD BE EXPECTED AND AS THE SITUATION IMPROVES THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL MACHINERY IS BEING REORGANIZED TO PUSH AHEAD WITH PROVINCE PROGRAMS. THE ENEMY HAS LOST THIS ROUND. HE MAY TRY AGAIN BUT HE NEEDS A NEW PLAN AND LOTS OF RESUPPLY AND REINFORCEMENTS. ANOTHER MAJOR EFFORT PROBABLY WILL NOT OCCUR BEFORE ABOUT 7 FEBRUARY AND IF THE ALLIES MAKE THE MOST OF THE COUNTERSWEEPS, THIS EFFORT COULD BE DELAYED FOR MONTHS. IF THE ENEMY EMPLOYES AIR, HOWEVER, THE SITUATION COULD BE REVERSED. (COMMENT: THE VC PROPAGANIZED THAT IT HAD BEEN SUPPLIED WITH AIRCRAFT, WHICH WOULD BE USED ONLY IN AN EXTREME SITUATION, A FEW MONTHS AGO, ACCORDING TO INFORMANTS OF AN OFFICIAL VIETNAMESE SECURITY SERVICE.) KHE SANH IS A SEPARATE PROBLEM THE ENEMY SEEMS TO BE GATHERING HIS STRENGTH FOR A MAJOR PUSH AGAINST WELL-ENTRENCHED ALLIED FORCES THERE.

41. FIELD DISSEM: STATE USMACV CORDS III MAF 7TH AF USARV COMNAVFORV USAID DIR/JUSPAO (MR. ZORTHIAN ONLY) CINCPAC ARPAC PACAF
REPORT CLASS [REDACTED] GROUP I

END OF MESSAGE